



# Southwestway Park / Master Plan



DEPARTMENT OF METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT/DIVISION OF PLANNING

For: Department of Parks and Recreation

## SOUTHWESTWAY PARK

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## SOUTHWESTWAY PARK

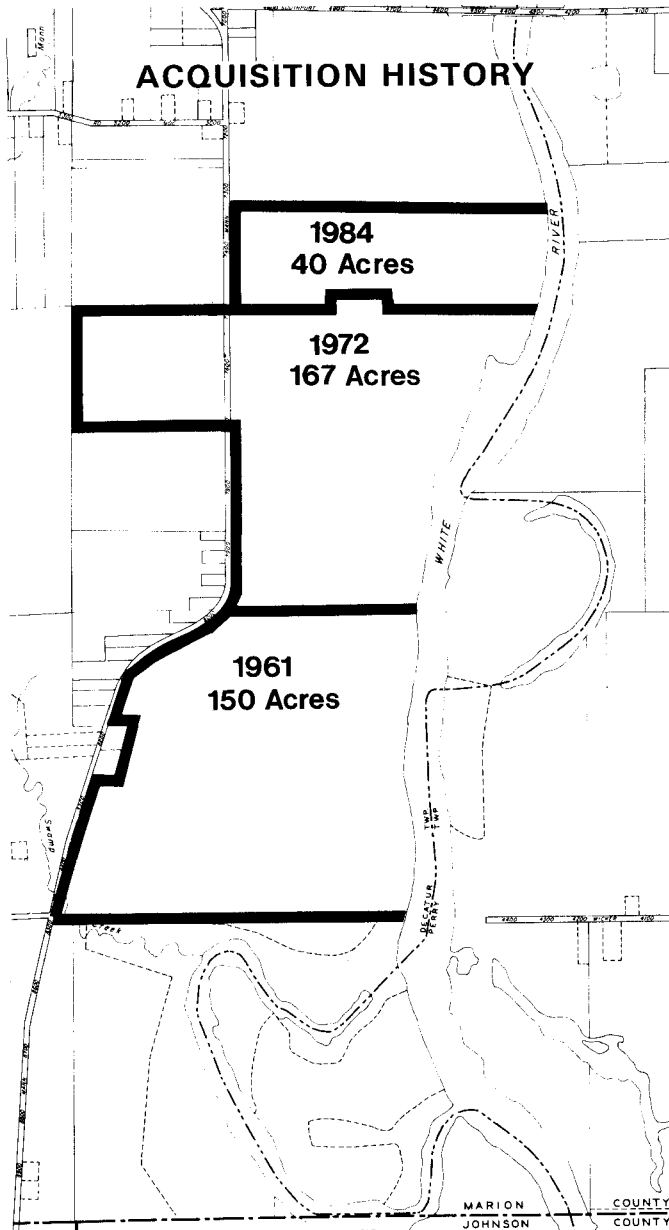
Southwestway Park, located in southwestern Marion County, is one of the county's five regional parks. Regional parks are established as recreational facilities that supplement the neighborhood and community parks. They are typically oriented to the natural environment and provide facilities that parks with smaller land bases cannot.

Southwestway Park provides access to woods, meadows, the White River and rolling topography that includes one of Marion County's highest points--Mann Hill.

### HISTORY

The area around Southwestway Park was first settled by Quakers from the Carolinas. One of the early towns in the area was Spring Valley. It was platted in 1848 and was located near Spring Valley Hill. Spring Valley Hill later became known as Mann Hill. At one time Spring Valley contained five businesses, a post office, a school and a number of residences. However, by 1884 Spring Valley was abandoned.

For many decades the land that was to become Southwestway Park was farmed and pastured. Then in the late 1950's and early 1960's the Metropolitan Department of Parks and Recreation sought to establish a large, regional park in each quadrant of the county. To create a regional park in the southwest part of the county, 150 acres between Mann Road and White River were acquired in 1961. In



1968 most of the property was developed into a 9-hole golf course.

In 1972, an additional 167 acres to the north of the park were acquired. Much of this area, including Mann Hill, had previously been leased for several years to a motorcycling group. At the time of purchase by the Department of Parks and Recreation, the area east of Mann Road was proposed to remain a motorcycling area while the land west of Mann Road was proposed to become a community park. Due to environmental considerations, the motorcycling area was not developed. The site was fenced and recreational use since then has been minimal. The area west of Mann Road also has not been developed and is leased out for farming.

Forty more acres were added to the park in late 1984. The additional acreage was located between Mann Road and the White River immediately north of the existing park property. Total acreage of the park is now 357.

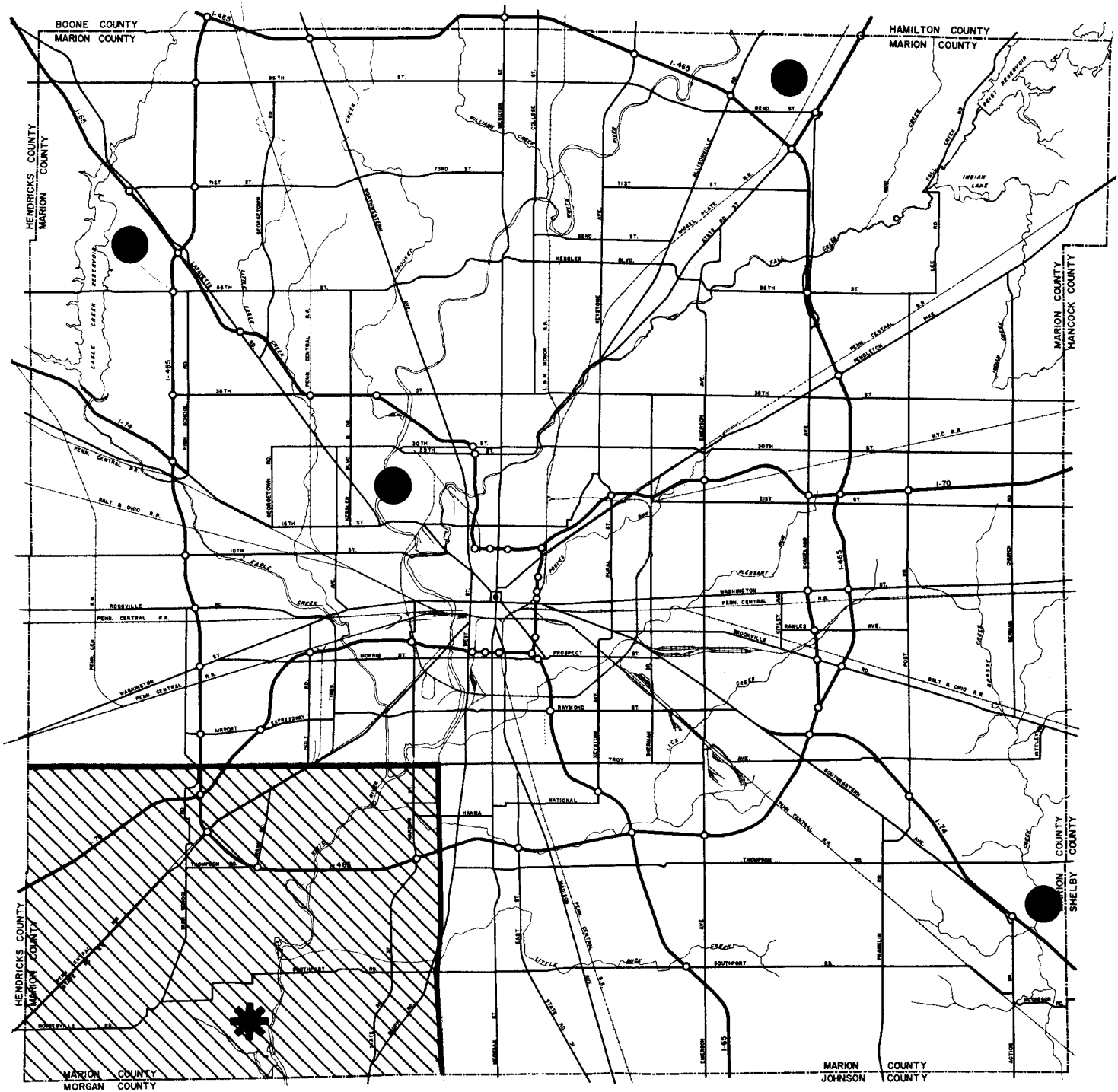
#### CHARACTER OF DISTRICT

Marion County is divided into 15 Park Planning Districts. Southwestway Park is located in Park Planning District #13. This district is composed of the western one-third of Perry Township and all of Decatur Township. It is one of the fastest-growing areas in the county, with a 27% growth rate between 1970 and 1980.

The population density of this park district is only about one-fourth that of the county as a whole: 504 persons/square mile compared to 1899/square mile for the county. Because the vast majority of the population reside in family households (94%), the average family and household size are above the county's (85%). This park district is also characterized by a high housing occupancy rate (95%) and high proportion of owner-occupied housing units (79%).

The age breakdown of the district reveals a high proportion of juveniles, a low proportion of college-age population, an above-average proportion of persons in the childbearing/rearing age group and a low proportion of persons in the middle-age and elderly age groups.

The education level of this district is not quite up to county norms, though it is not far behind. However, the district only has half the proportion of college graduates the county exhibits. The district shows stronger labor force characteristics than the county, though this is primarily due to the strength of the male labor force. The district's female labor force is not as active as the county's as a whole. The district's labor force can be characterized as leaning toward blue collar occupations. The district has an extremely high proportion of households with at least one vehicle (97%).



-  **SOUTHWESTWAY PARK**
-  **OTHER REGIONAL PARKS**
-  **PARK PLANNING DISTRICT #13**

June 1987

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Finally, although the median household income of the district is significantly higher than the county's, it has a lower per capita income.

A general description of this park district might be as follows: It is a mostly rural area populated by families. The high labor force participation rate of the males and low participation rate of the females indicate that many households are probably the traditional working husband and non-working housewife type. The high proportion of juveniles in the population reinforces this observation. Because this area is mostly rural, there is very little commercial development, few establishments to provide employment and inconsequential bus service--the residents tend to drive significant distances any time they leave home. This may be the cause, or the result of, the high proportion of households with at least one vehicle. The slightly below-average per capita income indicates a potential popularity for free, public recreation.

There are two park properties located in Park Planning District #13--Southwestway Park and Carson Park. Current facilities at Southwestway Park are a nine-hole golf course and a driving range. Carson Park is a 22-acre neighborhood park. It is highly developed, with a small picnic area, playground, two tennis courts, six ball diamonds, two basketball courts, concession stand and soccer fields. Other recreational facilities are provided by the seven schools in the district. These facilities include 18 ball diamonds, 7 1/2 basketball courts, 5 playgrounds, 4 tennis courts and an indoor swimming pool at Decatur Central High School.

Land use around Southwestway Park is primarily agricultural. However, residential development is taking place in the vicinity. Homes have been built on both sides of Mann Road adjacent to the golf course. Across White River from the park, gravel is quarried.

The Comprehensive Plan of Marion County, Indiana indicates appropriate future development of land in the county. The suggested land uses for the property north, south and west of Southwestway Park are low-density housing (2-5 units per acre) and very low-density housing (1-2 units per acre). The suggested land use of the land to the east of the park is urban conservation. The urban conservation classification indicates an area with unusual environmental characteristics requiring special attention--in this case, the White River floodway.

## SITE ENVIRONMENT

The project area lies 10 miles south of downtown Indianapolis and fronts on the White River, a major tributary in the Wabash River drainage system. The White River, roughly 150 feet wide and flowing in a southerly direction, forms the eastern boundary to the site. Its waters are heavily polluted from various upstream sources that contribute municipal and industrial waste. Due to the river's pollution, the Indiana Department of Environmental Management has issued a fish consumption advisory. A significant percentage of the fish taken from the river have a high level of toxins in their bodies. The river is safe for boating, but is unsafe for full body contact activities such as swimming.

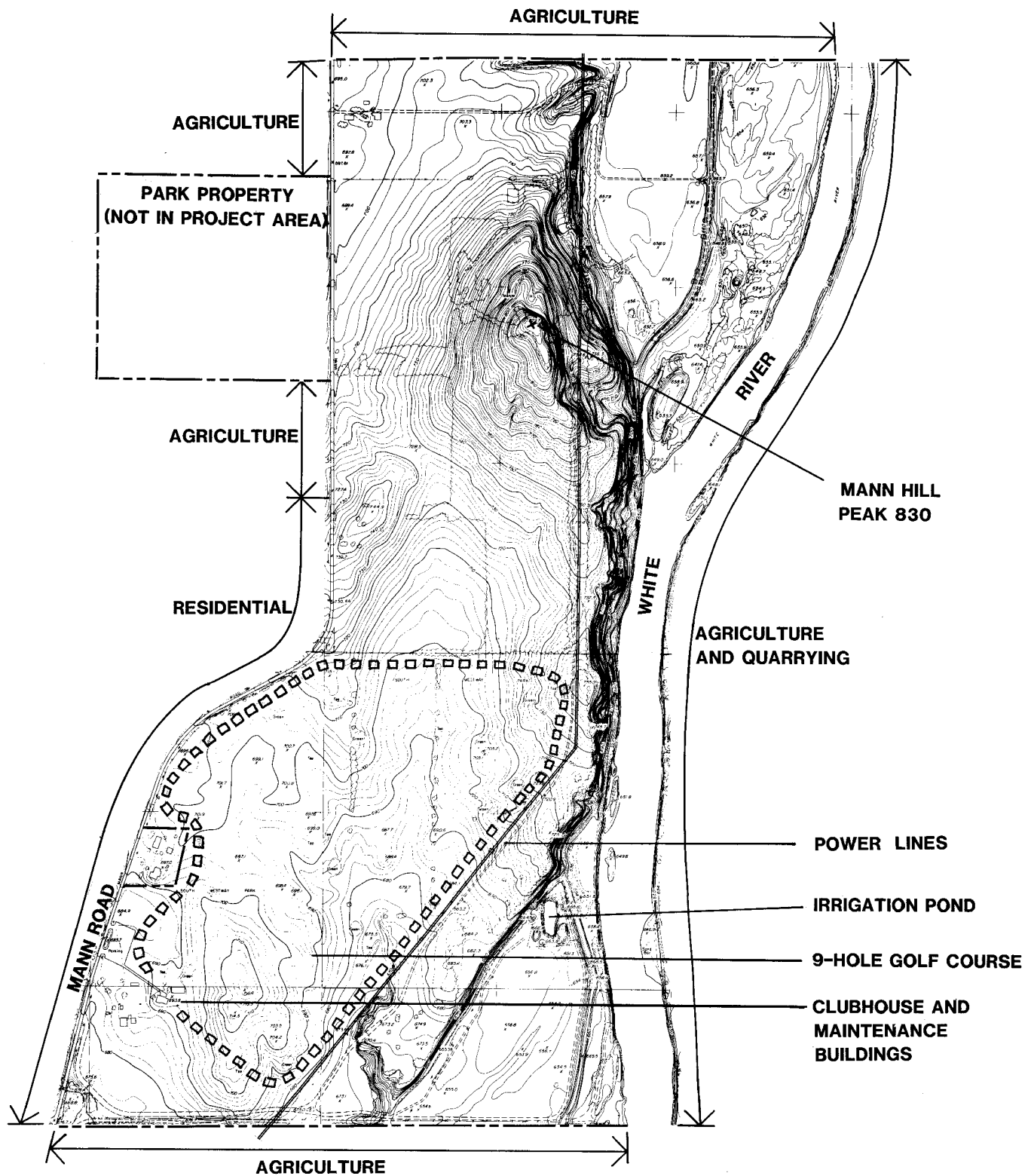
### Topography and Vegetation

Topography on the site is pronounced. Mann Hill, with a crest elevation of 829 feet msl, is the most prominent topographic feature for several miles around. From its crest the east facing slope is steep, with a grade of about 30 percent. The slope to the west is considerably more gentle, with a grade of about 10 percent. Topography over the southern portion of the site is rolling. Project lands rise from a low elevation of about 646 feet msl at the edge of the river to the maximum elevation of 830 feet msl for an overall vertical rise of 183 feet.

All slopes of Mann Hill support a dense cover of woody vegetation. The steep east and north facing slopes support a cover of relatively large, mature trees; common species being ash, hard maple, black walnut, black cherry, birch and several species of oak. The more gentle west and south slopes were pastured some 20-30 years ago. A few remnants of large old birch, maple and osage orange still remain. A young and very dense woody cover has volunteered over this entire old pasture area. The new growth ranges in size from whips to about six inches in caliper and includes species such as maple, ash, elm, black cherry, black walnut, locust, hackberry and raspberry. The ground is well shielded with heavy leaf litter. The floodplain east of Mann Hill supports red maple and cottonwood.

Despite the good vegetation cover on Mann Hill, erosion is a problem in some places. Before becoming City property the site was used for motorcycling. Although the site is now partially fenced, some motorcycling still occurs on the site. Tracks worn by motorcycles on the steep slopes are a main cause of erosion on the site.

A 100-foot wide powerline easement runs north-south across the site just east of the crest of Mann Hill. This easement is cleared of trees and periodic maintenance keeps the vegetation low.



## SOUTHWESTWAY PARK

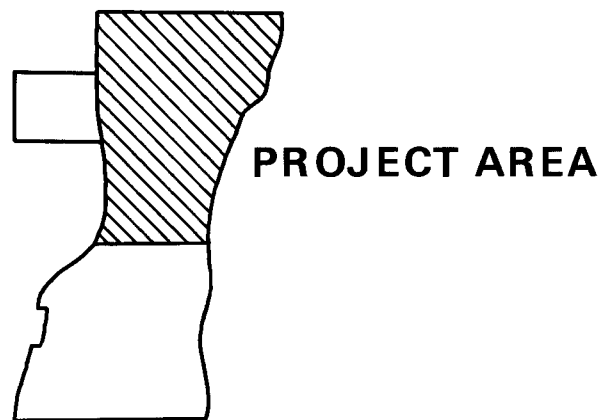
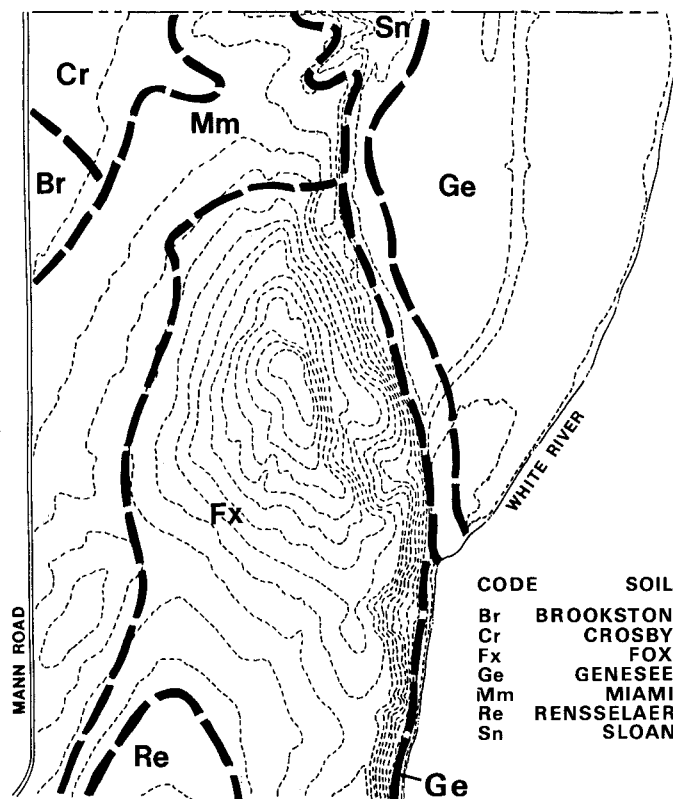
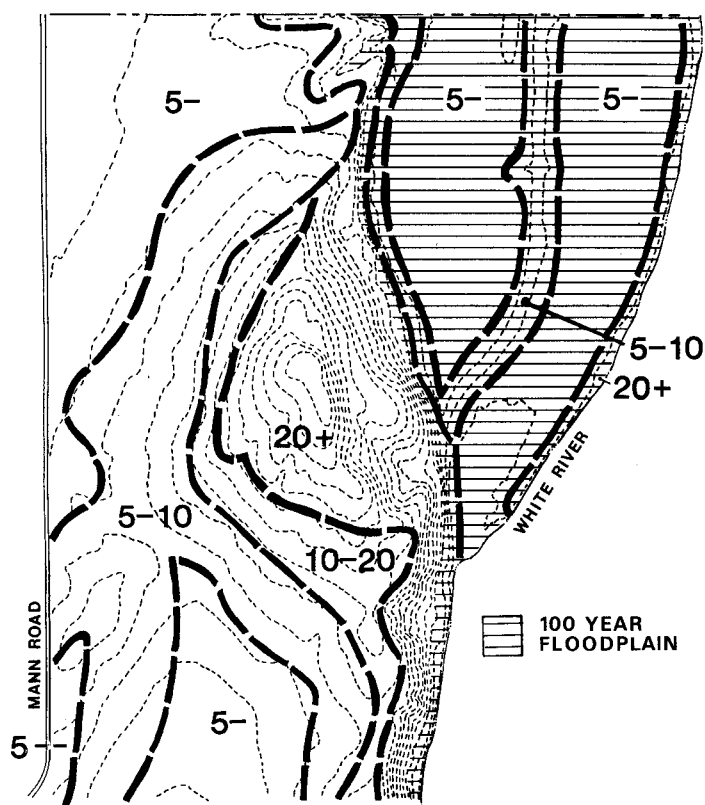
### Existing Conditions

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Indianapolis-Marion County, Indiana





# SOUTHWESTWAY PARK

## Site Environment

## Soil Types

Soil types found on the site are Fox (Fx) on the wooded slopes of Mann Hill and the majority of the adjacent open land, Miami (Mm) on the open area grading off to the west, Brookston (Br) and Crosby (Cr) in the gently sloping northwest corner, Genesee (Ge) and Sloan (Sn) on the floodplain along the White River and Rensselaer (Re) on a low area to the west.

The Fox series consists of deep, well-drained soils that have a medium or moderately coarse textured surface layer. They have moderate permeability and runoff is very slow to medium. This soil has slight to moderate limitation for most types of intensive recreation activities, depending upon the degree of slope.

The Miami series consists of deep, well-drained soils that have a medium or moderately fine textured surface layer. They have moderate permeability and runoff is variable. These soils are more erodable than the Fox series, the extent of erosion depending on the degree of slope and intensity of development and use.

Genesee soil is a floodplain type with moderate permeability and slow runoff. Brookston is a very poorly drained soil with severe limitations for recreation development. Sloan soil is another floodplain type. It has severe limitations for recreation development due to wetness.

## Fauna

In its present state the site provides excellent habitat for a variety of wildlife, both game and nongame species. The fallow fields, overgrown with a wide variety of grasses and weeds, and the overgrown fencerows provide excellent food and cover for species as cottontail rabbit and bobwhite quail, while the wooded areas supply the needs of the fox squirrel. Wide ranging species such as raccoon, opossum, skunk and grey fox are common throughout the area. Waterfowl make some seasonal use of the White River and species such as the mallard duck, black duck, wood duck and teal may be observed occasionally during migration. Several species of migrant songbirds nest locally while a great number move through the area. The area also provides excellent habitat for the small mammals such as the white-footed mouse, meadow vole, jumping mouse, common mole and the short-tailed shrew.

The fishery of the White River is not significant within the area of the project. Only those rough species that are extremely pollution-tolerant, such as carp, are found along this segment of the stream.

## MASTER PLAN PROPOSALS

Proposed future development for Southwestway Park includes expansion of the 9-hole golf course to 18 holes.

The northern portion of the park will receive most of the development. A community building will be visible upon entering the site. The community building will house meeting rooms, an educational center, restrooms, concession, winter warming room and equipment rental. Playfields are proposed for west and north of the center. Three ball diamonds, two soccer fields and a playground are laid out around a central parking lot. A picnic area with a shelter and a playground is to be developed on the slope of Mann Hill. An overlook tower will be constructed on the crest of the hill. The tower will be the head of a sledding run down the west slope, and a toboggan run curving down the east slope. The toboggan run would be refrigerated for an extended season.

Decatur Township residents own more horses than the residents of any other township. To provide for the interest in horses in the township, a number of equestrian facilities are proposed. Equestrian trails will extend the full length of the park, crossing wooded areas, open spaces and a variety of terrain. A stable will be constructed to board visitors' horses. Also located within the park will be a large competition area for horse club shows and other uses. Parking areas large enough to handle vehicles with horse trailers will be located near both the stable and the competition area.

In addition to horse trails, hiking, nature and cross-country ski trails will be developed. A primitive camping area, reached only by hiking, will be designated along the White River. The camping area will be used primarily by organized groups.

A boat launch into the White River will be installed near the northern border of the site. Water level in the river is adequate for small boats and canoes. A picnic area will be developed between the boat ramp and the equestrian competition ring.

Maintenance facilities for the site will be incorporated in the stable.

The Department of Parks and Recreation-held property west of Mann Road will not be developed. The area will be sold and property elsewhere will be acquired.



## SOUTHWESTWAY PARK MASTER PLAN

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June 1987  
Department of Metropolitan Development  
Division of Planning  
Indianapolis-Marion County, Indiana

## CONCLUSION

The process undertaken to develop this Master Plan involved a wide variety of people with a wide variety of interests and concerns. Their involvement in this process has helped to insure that the recreational needs of the citizens of Indianapolis and Marion County are satisfied. This final Master Plan document is representative of their involvement in a series of public meetings. The resulting proposals should benefit the public of the City of Indianapolis.

To ensure that Southwestway Park continues to be responsive to the needs of its users, this Master Plan should be frequently reviewed and periodically updated.



METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

OF MARION COUNTY, INDIANA

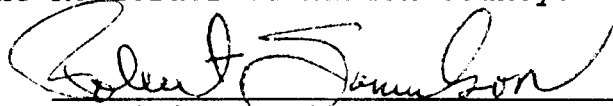
DOCKET NO. 87-CPS-R-3

RESOLUTION 87-CPS-R-3, AMENDING A SEGMENT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE OR MASTER PLAN OF MARION COUNTY, INDIANA, SOUTHWESTWAY PARK MASTER PLAN.

BE IT RESOLVED by the Metropolitan Development Commission of Marion County, Indiana, that, pursuant to I. C. 36-7-4, the Metropolitan Development Commission of Marion County, Indiana, hereby amends the COMPREHENSIVE OR MASTER PLAN FOR MARION COUNTY, INDIANA, by the adoption of the SOUTHWESTWAY PARK MASTER PLAN, which is attached hereto, incorporated herein by reference and made a part hereof and by hereinafter designating same as an AMENDMENT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE OR MASTER PLAN OF MARION COUNTY, INDIANA.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Metropolitan Development Commission certify copies of this RESOLUTION 87-CPS-R-3, AMENDING THE COMPREHENSIVE OR MASTER PLAN OF MARION COUNTY, INDIANA the SOUTHWESTWAY PARK MASTER PLAN.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Director of the Department of Metropolitan Development is directed to mail or deliver certified copies of this RESOLUTION 87-CPS-R-3, upon final adoption, as an AMENDMENT TO THE COMPREHENSIVE OR MASTER PLAN OF MARION COUNTY, INDIANA, to the legislative authorities of all incorporated cities and towns in Marion County, Indiana, the Mayor of the City of Indianapolis, the City-County Council of Indianapolis and Marion County, and the Board of Commissioners of Marion County, Indiana. The Director shall also file one (1) copy of the Resolution in the office of the Recorder of Marion County.



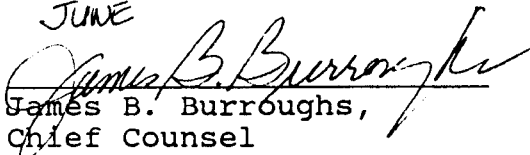
Presiding Officer  
Metropolitan Development  
Commission



Secretary  
Metropolitan Development  
Commission

APPROVED AS TO LEGAL FORM  
AND ADEQUACY THIS 3rd DAY  
OF MAY, 1987.

JUNE



James B. Burroughs,  
Chief Counsel

GENERAL RESOLUTION NO. 54, 1987

BOARD OF PARKS AND RECREATION

CONSOLIDATED CITY OF INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF PARKS AND RECREATION OF THE CONSOLIDATED CITY OF INDIANAPOLIS THAT:

The agreement by and between the Department of Parks and Recreation of the City of Indianapolis and DEPARTMENT OF METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT in the amount of N/A calling for APPROVAL OF THE SOUTHWESTWAY PARK MASTER PLAN the form of which is to be approved by the Department Attorney, be and is APPROVED.

FURTHER, RESOLVED, that the Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation is hereby authorized and directed to execute such agreement for and in behalf of the Department.

BOARD OF PARKS AND RECREATION  
CONSOLIDATED CITY OF INDIANAPOLIS

By:

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Franz Arthur Strong, Chairman

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Richard Lahr

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Barbara C. Laughlin

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Benjamin Singleteary  
Benjamin Singleteary

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Assistant Corporation Counsel

Barbara Kay Walker  
Barbara Kay Walker, Board Secretary

5/13/87  
Date



SOUTHWESTWAY PARK

June, 1987

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